

## Part B State Annual Performance Report (APR) for 2007

### Overview of the Annual Performance Report (APR) Development:

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) first compiled and analyzed data for the development of the Annual Performance Report (APR)/State Performance Plan (SPP) utilizing the expertise of internal personnel. A draft along with the data was reviewed with the Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee (RISEAC). RISEAC advises the Commissioner and Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education on matters concerning: (a) the unmet educational needs of children with disabilities; (b) comments publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities; (c) advises the Rhode Island Department of Education in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under section 618 of the IDEA; (d) advises the RIDE in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal Monitoring Reports under Part B of the IDEA; and (e) advises the RIDE in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities. Membership of the committee is composed of individuals involved in or concerned with the education of children with disabilities. Parents of children with disabilities birth through 26 maintain the majority of the Committee Membership. The Membership also includes individuals with disabilities, teachers, representatives of institutions of higher education, private schools, charter schools, state and local education officials, administrators of programs for children with disabilities foster care and homelessness, vocational, community or business organizations, juvenile and adult corrections and State Child Serving Agencies. The SEAC reviewed the draft and provided suggestions and input. These were incorporated into the final copy of this document.

### Overview of the Annual Performance Report Development for Indicator 2:

#### Defining a Dropout in Rhode Island

Rhode Island's definition of a dropout is the same as that defined by the National Center on Educational Statistics. The following is adapted from one of the NCES publications on Dropout (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/dropout00-01/>). The definition determines whether an individual is a dropout by his or her enrollment status at the beginning of the school year (the same day used for the enrollment count).

Beginning in 1990, NCES defined a dropout as an individual who

1. was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year (e.g., 1999-2000); and
2. was not enrolled at the beginning of the current school year (e.g., 2000-01); and
3. has not graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved educational program; and
4. does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:
  - transfer to another public school district, private school, or state- or district approved educational program (including correctional or health facility programs);
  - temporary absence due to suspension or school-excused illness; or
  - death.

Individuals who complete 1 year of school but fail to enroll at the beginning of the subsequent year ("summer dropouts") are counted as dropouts from the school year and grade in which they fail to enroll. Those who leave secondary education but are enrolled in an adult education program at the beginning of the school year are considered dropouts. Dropout status is determined by a student's status on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Students who receive their GED certificate by October 1 are not counted as dropouts if the state or district recognizes this as an approved program. Although a student whose whereabouts are unknown is considered a dropout, states are not required to count students who leave the United States as dropouts even if there is no information about such students' subsequent enrollment status. A student can be counted as a dropout only once for a single school year but can, if he or she repeatedly drops out and re-enrolls, appear as a dropout in more than 1 year.

Rhode Island utilized the same dropout data reporting system for students in general education and special education. Students enrolled in charter schools, state operated schools including youth and adult corrections facilities and private special education school placements are included in the dropout counts.

#### Reducing Dropouts - Rhode Island High School Reform:

The Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approved regulations for the reform of high schools in January 2003 and revised the regulations in September 2008. The regulations address the areas of literacy, personalization and graduation by proficiency. The regulations intend to improve the performance of high schools, increase graduation rates, improve post graduation outcomes and improve supports to students. A significant effect of the regulations has been the development of literacy intervention strategies and personalization strategies supporting students to remain in school. (See indicator 1 for more information on the Rhode Island High School Regulations and the RI Diploma System).

#### Literacy Intervention Strategies

Rhode Island has established the linkage between poor literacy skills and the inability for students to access a challenging and rigorous curriculum. Further, student with poor literacy skills rapidly become disenfranchised and become risk for dropping out. The Rhode Island High School Regulations require LEAs to assess students, report the results, design a series of interventions and monitor and adjust as necessary. The RIDE provided a complete review of each LEAs literacy intervention system in July 2006 and again in October 2007. RIDE will review each LEAs literacy intervention system as part of the Commissioners' Review beginning in 2009 as LEAs seek full approval for their diploma systems.

#### Personalization Strategies

The Rhode Island High School Regulations call for high schools to develop strategies to improve supports to students. Schools have begun implementation of several strategies to meet this requirement. Early adopters of these strategies have reported improved attendance rates, reduced referral and discipline rates and overall improvement in school climate. The personalization strategies have implications for special education students since all reported interventions have been applied to the entire student population. RIDE provided a Commissioners Review of each high school's personalization strategies in July 2006 again in October 2007. RIDE will review each LEAs literacy intervention system as part of the Commissioners' Review beginning in 2009 as LEAs seek full approval for their diploma systems.

#### Progressive Support and Intervention

Under NCLB, RIDE has developed the Progressive Support and Intervention Office (PS&I) to facilitate intervention with LEAs that are not meeting the states performance targets. The Sanction or Intervention categories are described below. Districts under corrective action under No Child Left Behind are receiving direct intervention from the PS&I Office. In 2005, 17 Rhode Island high schools were in one of the five "in need of improvement" categories. In 2006, 23 high schools were showing insufficient progress, 14 schools were in this designation for the first time (watch status). In 2007 there were 20 high schools in need of improvement and 11 high schools were in designated for the first time. Participation in assessment targets and graduation rates were added to the school performance formulas beginning with the 2006 reporting. Several of the interventions being provided by RIDE are directly targeted for failing high schools. (Complete reports are available at: <http://www.eride.ri.gov/reportcard/08/default.asp>).

#### RI Sanction or Intervention Categories

Every school receives an accountability status designation to further explain the consequences of its classification from a multiple-year perspective. Some of the sanction codes apply only to schools receiving federal Title I funds.

**General Sanction or Intervention Status Key**

- 1 - New School (first year of operation)
- 2 - Watch (a school with *Insufficient Progress* or in a *Caution* status for the first year)
- 3 - In Need of Improvement, Choice (Title I school)
- 4 - In Need of Improvement, Supplemental Services (Title I school)
- 5 - In Need of Improvement, Corrective Action (Title I school)
- 6 - In Need of Improvement, Delay, first year making AYP for a school "In Need of Improvement" in the prior year.
- 7 - In Need of Improvement, PS&I, non-Title I school, two or more years of not meeting AYP in the same content area or nonacademic indicator.
- 8 - In Need of Improvement, Restructuring (Title I school) (A separate indicator will present number of years in restructuring.)
- T - Title I school
- \* A school may receive multiple codes. For example, a T, 3, 4 school is a Title I school providing both Choice (to select another school) and Supplemental Educational Services.

**Rhode Island Dropout Prevention Summit**

The dropout crisis in the state became more apparent with the application of the cohort formula for calculating the graduation and dropout rates last year. Several LEAs that had historically reported state average dropout rates saw a significant jump once they were held accountable to the numbers of students who were simply reported as missing in their data. This has created a public concern for the dropout rate in the state with particular focus on the urban school districts. This year RIDE has formed a partnership with Kids Count to raise the public awareness of the high dropout rates (related information at: <http://www.rikidscount.org/matriarch/documents/HSGradRate%20Supplement.pdf>). In 2008 RIDE and Kids Count will be hosting a Dropout Prevention Summit and the RIDE Leadership Series (statewide capacity building summits held three times per year) have been completely devoted to the topic of dropout prevention.

**The Dropout Rate for Students in Special Education**

RIDE, Office for Diverse Learners staff are directly involved with the development and delivery of training and technical assistance under the Rhode Island High School Regulations and the RI Diploma System particularly in the areas of Equity, Access and Fairness. Principles of universal design, Response to Intervention and collaborative instruction have been fully integrated into the training and are integral criteria in the Commissioners Review.

Progressive Support and Intervention was designed and is being implemented as an "all students" initiative. RIDE Office for Diverse Learners staff serve on all PS&I teams providing interventions for districts and schools in need of improvement. Office resources have been aligned to support the schools that are not meeting the expected graduation and dropout targets. RIDE has adopted the IES Practice Guide: Dropout Prevention (2008) Recommendations as a template for discussions with LEAs about practices within the schools for reducing the dropout rates and identifying capacity needs (see: [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dp\\_pg\\_090308.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dp_pg_090308.pdf)).

**Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE**

1. **Indicator –:** Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school compared to the percent of all youth in the State dropping out of high school. (20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

**Measurement:** Beginning in 2007 Rhode Island integrated the data collection for graduation and dropout rates for special education students with the state's student information system. Rhode Island's student information system includes a unique state assigned student identifier (SASID) for every student in the state. The integration of the special education graduation and dropout data

collection system into the Rhode Island student information system has allowed the state to generate a valid and reliable picture of the graduation and dropout situation. The cohort formula (four year graduation rate) utilized for graduation rate is:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} 2007-08 & & & (\text{Dropouts} - \text{Returned Dropouts}) & \\ \text{Annual Dropout Rate} & = & & / & \text{X100} \\ & & & \text{October 1, 2006 Grade 9 – 12 Enrollment} & \end{array}$$

FFY	Measurable and Rigorous Target
<b>2007</b> (2007-2008)	26.7% The dropout rate for students in Special Education will be reduced by 1%.
<b>2008</b> (2008-2009)	25.7% The dropout rate for students in Special Education will be reduced by 1%.
<b>2009</b> (2009-2010)	24.7% The dropout rate for students in Special Education will be reduced by 1%.
<b>2010</b> (2010-2011)	23.7% The dropout rate for students in Special Education will be reduced by 1%.

**Actual Target Data for 2007:**

#### Rhode Island Graduation Rate Data 2006 & 2007 APR

Exit Type	Special Education			All Students		
Year/Cohort Count	2006 APR Cohort Count 3,450	2007 APR Cohort Count 2,960	Increase/ Decrease	2006 APR Cohort Count 14,915	2007 APR Cohort Count 13,198	Increase/ Decrease
Percent Graduated	55.9% (1,929)	55.9% (1,656)	0	70.1% (10,459)	73.9% (9,757)	+3.8%
Percent Dropped Out	27.7% (955)	25.4% (753)	-2.3%	19.2% (2,868)	15.5% (2,049)	-3.7%
Percent	4.6%	4.0%	-0.6%	4.6%	3.2%	-1.4%

Completed GED	(159)	(118)		(689)	(426)	
Percent Retained/ Still in School	11.8% (407)	14.6% (433)	+2.8%	6.0% (899)	7.3% (966)	+1.3%

**Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for 2007:**

Baseline for the percent of students in special education dropping out as established in the 2006 APR at 27.7%. The target for the 2007 FFY was 26.7%. The actual dropout rate for FFY 2007 was 25.4%. Rhode Island achieved the measurable and rigorous target and experienced a 2.4% decline in the dropout rate.

Completed improvement activities are described in the table below.

**Revisions, with Justification, to Proposed Targets / Improvement Activities / Timelines / Resources for 2007:**

Rhode Island achieved the measurable and rigorous target for FFY 2007. Revisions to the measurable and rigorous targets will not be made at this time.

2007 Improvement Activities	Timelines	Resources	Status
Development and implementation of a valid and reliable data system for collecting and reporting graduation rates for special education students that is the same system as all students.	By December 2007 - Accomplished	Personnel from the RIDE Office for Diverse Learners and Office of Network and Information Services	Complete
Implementation of Rhode Island High School Regulations - Commissioners Review & Approval.	Official designations were released in January 2008.  Next review begins Spring, 2009 with full approval available beginning in 2010. All schools must meet full approval by 2012.	RIDE, Office of High School & Middle School Redesign.  Participation of RIDE, Office for Diverse Learners personnel representing special education and ELL.	Ongoing  Designations released January, 2008. No schools received full approval, most received "preliminary approval", some received "approval withheld" indicating the need for significant action.
Reassignment of RI Department of Education,	September 2006	RI Department of Education, Office for	Complete

Office for Diverse Learners personnel to align with districts in need of intervention. Assign appropriate personnel to Progressive Support and Intervention Teams (P,S & I) targeting LEAs with high schools “in need of intervention”.		Diverse Learners personnel have been assigned to the LEAs with high schools that are in need of intervention.	
Monitor impact on the dropout rate for students in special education based on implementation of the Rhode Island Diploma System and utilization of the new cohort formula. Develop district level reporting and performance indications.	2008-2010	RI Department of Education, Office for Diverse Learners personnel  Provide analysis on the impact and develop corrective actions in processes as necessary.	Ongoing  District level reporting available as of 2007. LEAs including plans to reduce dropout rates in the LEAs application to RIDE for state and federal aid beginning with 2008FY grant submission.
Support to school personnel in training and implementation of effective research based dropout prevention strategies to improve school retention.	2008, ongoing	RI Department of Education, Office for Diverse Learners, Adult & Career & Technical Education and Office for High School/Middle School Redesign personnel.	Ongoing  Adopted the IES Practice Guide: Dropout Prevention (2008) Recommendations as a template for discussions with LEAs and identifying capacity needs. RIDE will review and publicize promising practices in dropout prevention.
<b>2008 Improvement Activities</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Status</b>
Examine the targeted dropout reduction activities in LEAs federal and state grant submissions with reductions in dropout rate data. Target districts with rates below the state average.	Spring 2009 (utilizing 2007 data). LEA grants are due in May of each year.	RIDE, Office for Diverse Learners personnel	New

